

## **COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet**

### **About the Vaccine**

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#### **Are COVID-19 vaccines effective?**

Yes. Evidence shows that COVID-19 vaccines work to prevent COVID-19. Of the first two vaccines to be granted FDA emergency use authorization, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna are ~94-95% effective at preventing COVID-19 disease.

#### **How many doses of COVID-19 vaccine will be needed?**

Both the Pfizer-BioNTech and the Moderna vaccines require two doses. Those who receive a dose of a particular vaccine must receive a second dose from the same manufacturer - they are not interchangeable. (Ex: If you received a first dose of Moderna vaccine, your second dose must also be a Moderna vaccine). A second dose is needed to reach the highest level of immunity. Requiring more than one dose is not unique to COVID-19 vaccines. Other common vaccines, such as the Hepatitis B vaccine, require multiple doses.

#### **When is the second dose due?**

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine second dose is administered 21 days after the first dose. The Moderna vaccine second dose is administered 28 days after the first dose. \*Note: The second dose should be administered as close to the recommended interval as possible, however the actual date of the second dose may be longer than recommended based on factors such vaccine and appointment availability.

#### **If I already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated?**

Not enough is known about how long natural immunity lasts for those that have recovered from the virus. People who have recovered from COVID-19 may still benefit from getting vaccinated.

#### **Will the vaccine protect against the new COVID-19 variant now confirmed in the United States?**

Multiple variants of the virus that causes COVID-19 have been documented in the United States and globally during this pandemic. Most variants do not change how the virus behaves. Experts anticipate little to no impact on vaccine efficacy, however studies are ongoing.

#### **Can other vaccines help prevent me from getting COVID-19?**

Other vaccines, such as those for flu, measles, or other diseases, will not protect you from COVID-19. Only the vaccines designed specifically to protect you from COVID-19 can prevent COVID-19.

#### **If I currently have COVID-19 can I receive the vaccine?**

No. Defer vaccination until you have recovered from the acute illness (if the person had symptoms) and criteria have been met for you to discontinue isolation.

#### **Will the vaccine interfere with COVID-19 testing results?**

For PCR and Antigen Tests, vaccination will not change the odds of a false positive. A positive result would still be considered a true positive. Antibody tests cannot differentiate previous infection from vaccination.

#### **I've seen rumors on social media about vaccines. How can I tell what is true?**

The best thing you can do is educate yourself about the vaccines with information from trustworthy sources. The information in this FAQ sheet comes from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) which are trusted sources.

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### **Is it safe to receive the vaccine if I have a specific medical condition?**

Speak to your medical provider for guidance.

## **Safety and Side Effects**

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### **How will I know that the COVID-19 vaccine is safe?**

The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures that all vaccines are as safe as possible. Clinical trials study the effectiveness of the vaccine in tens of thousands of study participants. The FDA uses rigorous standards during the evaluation, and if it determines that a vaccine meets its safety and effectiveness requirements, provide approval or emergency use authorization. There have been no shortcuts in the vaccine development process. The COVID-19 vaccine development process involved several steps comparable with those used to develop other vaccines, such as the flu or measles vaccine.

### **How did this vaccine get made so quickly?**

There have been no shortcuts in the vaccine development process. The process has been quicker as a result of strategic efforts to run concurrent trial phases and reduce or eliminate months-long waiting periods during which documents would be prepared or be waiting for review. Researchers have been studying mRNA for decades, and early-stage clinical trials using mRNA vaccines have been carried out for influenza, Zika, rabies, and cytomegalovirus (CMV). Additionally, because COVID-19 comes from a family of viruses, including the SARS coronavirus of 2002 and the MERS coronavirus of 2012, scientists had already researched how they behaved and began development on a vaccine for MERS. Those years of research laid the groundwork for development of COVID-19 vaccines.

### **Can you get COVID-19 from COVID-19 vaccines?**

COVID-19 vaccines will not give you COVID-19. None of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in development in the United States use the live virus that causes COVID-19. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build immunity after vaccination. That means it is possible that a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before, or just after, getting the vaccination and become sick, since it takes the vaccine time to provide protection.

### **What are normal side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine?**

Soreness or redness at the injection site are common. Other common side effects are fever, chills, headache, tiredness, and muscle or joint pain. These side effects are normal as your body creates an immune response to protect you from COVID-19, and may increase with the second dose. Learn more about what to expect in [this video from the CDC](#).

### **Can the mRNA alter my DNA?**

Messenger ribonucleic acid, or mRNA, is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA) and does not interact with your DNA in any way. The mRNA from COVID-19 vaccines can most easily be described as a set of instructions for your body on how to make a harmless piece of "spike protein" to allow our immune systems to recognize that this protein doesn't belong there and begin building an immune response and making antibodies.

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### **Ohio's Distribution Plan and Eligibility**

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**Will Ohio make COVID-19 vaccination mandatory?**

No. The vaccine will be available, as supplies allow, to all Ohioans who choose to receive it.

**Will there be enough vaccine for everyone in Ohio?**

During the early phases of administration of COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S., supply will be limited. Therefore, not everyone will be able to be vaccinated right away. As vaccination production ramps up, every Ohioan who chooses may receive a vaccine as soon as large quantities are available.

**Who can get the vaccine in Ohio?**

Initially, there will be a limited number of vaccines available. Phase 1A includes groups like healthcare workers, residents and staff in nursing homes, and EMS responders. Phase 1B includes groups like teachers and those age 65 and up. We will continue to monitor as additional phases are announced. For more information go to <http://www.coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine>.

### **City of Columbus Specific Information**

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**How is the City of Columbus determining who is eligible for the vaccine?**

We are following the ODH and Governor's direction for the rollout of the vaccine which defines who is eligible in each phase. While the vaccination supply remains limited it may also be necessary to prioritize employees within an eligible group using the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) critical infrastructure guidance as well as other relevant factors.

**If I am eligible for the vaccine based on my job duties, how will I know when I can get the vaccine?**

Eligible employees will be notified by their department and given further guidance.

**I am not in one of the groups that have been announced. When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

We will continue to monitor the Governor's guidance on eligible employees. The speed at which Ohio will move through the phases depends on the number of vaccines available and how many people choose to receive the vaccine.

**Is it possible that I will be offered a COVID-19 vaccine outside of work first?**

Yes, if you meet the criteria to receive the vaccine for personal reasons (ex: age, medical condition). If you are eligible for personal reasons, the vaccine would be offered through a non-work related source, such as a physician or health department.

**If I don't get vaccinated now, can I opt in later?**

Yes. Once eligible, you may receive the vaccine at any time provided that supplies are available.

**Do I have to pay for the COVID-19 vaccine?**

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No. The vaccine will be given at no cost to you, however, you may need to provide your health insurance information when receiving the vaccine.

**Do I still need to wear a mask and practice social distancing after I receive the vaccine?**

Yes, you must still wear a mask and stay socially distanced. Not enough is known about whether or not you can still carry the virus and spread it to others.

**Who should I contact with additional questions about the vaccine?**

Ohio Department of Health Call Center (833-427-5634) Columbus Public Health (614-645-1519)